

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: Speechwriting

Series/Staff Member: Jeff Shesol

Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 19946

FolderID:

Folder Title:

Federalism Conf. Quebec 10/8/99 - DGA [Democratic Governors' Association]

Stack:

S

Row:

91

Section:

6

Shelf:

9

Position:

1

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 22, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL GOVERNOR'S ASSOCIATION DINNER

National Building Museum
Washington, D.C.

8:58 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm welcome. I thank Governor O'Bannon for his kind introduction. I thank him and Governor Patton for their leadership of the Democratic Governors. I am delighted that all of them are here tonight and I want to pay a special compliment to Tom Carper for his leadership for the National Governor's Association this year. (Applause.) And, I might add, a special compliment to all the Democratic governors who showed up here in Washington with an agenda for the NGA to put the children of this country first and put education on the front burner and not let it get mired in the partisan politics. They deserve an enormous amount of credit and I thank them. (Applause.)

I want to thank Katie Whelan, Jennifer Rokala, Mark Weiner for their work for the DGA. (Applause.) And I'd like to thank the leaders of our national party who are here tonight: Governor Romer, Mayor Archer, Congresswoman Sanchez and Joe Andrew -- whom we stole from Indiana, thank you very much. (Applause.) I thank the members of Congress who are here -- Senator Akaka, Senator Bayh, Senator Dodd, Congresswoman Mink, Congressman Hoyer and goodness knows who else is here; former Democratic Chairman Don Fowler and all the former governors who are here -- Governor Waihee, Governor Miller of Nevada, Governor Bayh -- a two-for. (Applause.)

Let me also say one other thing by way of introduction. I am profoundly grateful to the NGA for putting together, courtesy of my good friend, Frank Greer, that magnificent film on Lawton Chiles, one of the best, ablest people I ever knew and I thank you for that. (Applause.)

When Rutherford B. Hayes became governor of Ohio, he described his position in this way: not too much hard work, plenty of time to read, good society, et cetera. Hasn't changed much, has it? (Laughter.) After he became President he said, I am heartily tired of this life of bondage, responsibility and toil. Well, I don't think he was right about either job. And I'm proud of the work you do and grateful for the role that all of you played in giving me a chance to serve you as President. It is not bondage or toil, although it is responsibility.

Nearly everybody who has had this job has written something like that. And it makes you wonder if they complain about it so much why they work so hard to get it. There is no place on Earth I think, as President Kennedy once said, where a person is called upon to reach deep into what you believe and what you think should be done, and then given the opportunity to marshal the resources of the country to move forward. But I think it is clear to all of you who have worked with me in the past that much of the success that this country has enjoyed, that we were a part of -- and I certainly don't claim responsibility for all of it -- but whatever success we have been able to enjoy in this administration is in no small measure the result of the fact that I had a chance to serve as a governor for a dozen years. And I thank the

people of my state for giving me that chance and all the governors who worked with me. (Applause.)

In 1992, we said that we were bringing a new democratic philosophy to the country. All it really meant was that we were going to bring Democratic ideals of opportunity for all, and a community of all Americans, and the governors way of work -- putting new ideas over old ideology and people over old-fashioned Washington politics. It turned out to be a pretty good theory. All of you know that we've gone from a record deficit to a record surplus, that we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957, now the lowest unemployment rate of any industrial country in the entire world.

We have opened the doors of college to all Americans who are willing to work for it, provided immunizations for over 90 percent of our children for the first time in history. We're in the process, with your help, of providing health insurance to 5 million of the 10 million children in America who don't have it. Our country is working again and for that, and for the role all of you have played in it -- not only the governors and their staffs who are here, but all the others who are here, from the labor organizations and the education groups and the business groups -- I am profoundly grateful.

What I would like to just take a couple of minutes to talk to you about tonight is the urgency of the governors being involved in dealing now with the great long-term challenges of this country. The easiest thing to do when things are going well is to say, we worked hard to get here, let's take a break. I might say that every time our country has done this -- you go back through the whole history of America -- every time we have done this it has gotten us into trouble. And we can ill afford to do it now when the world is changing so fast and when even amidst our own prosperity, as all of you know, there is a lot of trouble around the world. Virtually all of Asia is in recession. Our neighbors in Latin America, our fastest-growing markets, all have had their economic growth dramatically reduced because of the global financial trouble. There are a lot of threats to our security lurking out there in nooks and crannies with discord the world over.

And I asked the American people in the State of the Union, and I ask the governors here tonight, to join me in making the most of this opportunity that we have, because of our prosperity and equally because of our national confidence, to look at the long-term challenges of the 21st century. We have a chance to guarantee for the next several decades that these challenges we know about now can at least be met. No one can foresee for sure what will happen 10 or 20 or 30 years from now -- but we know that if we deal with the problems that we know are out there now, if we seize the challenges we know are out there now, that our successors will have an easier path and our country will do a better job with more of its children.

We have to deal with the aging of America. There will be twice as many people over 65 in 2030 as there are now -- and I hope I'm still one of them. (Laughter.) You know, a lot of people go around wringing their hands about the problems with Social Security and Medicare. This is a high-class problem. We have this problem because we're living longer and staying healthier. The fastest growing group of Americans in percentage terms are people over 80. So I have asked the Congress to set aside 77 percent of this projected surplus for 15 years to save Social Security and Medicare and to improve them. (Applause.)

If we do that we will also be able to pay down the national debt so that in 15 years instead of half our annual income -- which is what it was when I took office -- it will be 7 percent of our annual income. That's the smallest percentage it has been since 1917, before this

country entered World War I. Instead of spending 14 cents on your tax dollar to pay interest on the debt, which is what we were paying in 1993, we'll be spending 2 cents. And if future Congresses have the discipline to stay on this track, we could actually be a debt-free nation in 19 years. Just think of it and what it would mean for our children. (Applause.)

We can save Social Security, we can do something about the inordinate rate of women on Social Security who are still living in poverty; we can lift the earnings limit that now is imposed on people on Social Security -- which I think is a mistake, since we have more and more older people who are healthy, who are strong and who want to work. We can add 20 years to the life of Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit with some significant, but doable, reforms if we will have the discipline to set aside 77 percent of this surplus. That leaves us plenty of money to have tax cuts. I think we should have them dedicated to helping middle class people save for their own retirement -- (applause) -- to have more investment in education and to pay for our military needs. We can do all of that. (Applause.)

Now, the easy thing to do -- we'll say, well, we've got this surplus, we waited 30 years for it, let's just give it away. It will be popular. There are a lot of Americans who could use all the money now. But it would be a mistake. And believe me, if you look at all this turmoil around the world -- and the governors that are going on the trade missions, that are seeking foreign investment, that want to do more business, you understand this. I don't know -- and I'll say more about this in a minute -- I don't know whether the United States can rectify a lot of these problems in the global economy in the next couple of years; I'm going to do everything I can to get that done. But I know this: if we have the debt going down, we'll keep interest rates down and investment high; if things go wrong overseas, they will be better than they otherwise would have been; and if things turn around overseas our boom will be greater than it otherwise would have been if we have the discipline to do this. And I implore you to help me.

The governors -- Democrat and Republican alike -- complained for years and years that everybody in Washington talked about balancing the budget and no one ever did anything about it. And after I got here and I saw all the blood that was on the floor after the '93 economic plan, I understood why nobody did anything about it. Dick Riley, my Education Secretary, another of our former colleagues, used to always tell me after that, when I'd be moping around, he'd say, just remember my old saying: let's change, you go first. (Laughter.) But we're here now and we don't want to turn around, we want to keep going.

You know we have to do something about the children and families in 21st century America. We have more kids in our schools, they have more diverse backgrounds; more of them come from parents who don't speak English, or whose first language is not English, than ever before; a lot of them are going to school in trailers, or in school buildings so old they can't even be hooked up to the Internet. I thank you for your support of our agenda to help you hire more teachers, to help you build or modernize schools. I ask you to continue to support our efforts to raise the standards. Governor Carper had the right slogan for this year's governors meeting: raising student achievement. We ought to end social promotion, but help the kids with after-school programs and summer school programs. (Applause.) We ought to turn around the failing schools. We ought to give the parents the report cards. (Applause.) We ought to do what it takes for educational excellence.

We also ought to do more to help working families afford quality child care. One of the great ironies is when we fought very hard for welfare reform the Democratic Governors stood with me in insisting that we get billions of dollars in that welfare reform bill for child care, that we

keep the guarantee of medical care and nutrition for the kids. The welfare rolls have dropped by nearly 50 percent. The people that are left are harder to place. We can't just let them be thrown into the streets. So a lot of you are using your surplus funds to put more money into child care and more money into training. It is an irony that a lot of people who have never been on welfare, but who have young children, cannot afford their child care needs. In our balanced budget this year we have a comprehensive program that will allow millions of children to have comprehensive child care while their parents go to work. And succeeding at home and work ought to be America's family mission for the 21st century. I ask you for your support for that. (Applause.)

And for our efforts to expand the Family Leave Law, to raise the minimum wage, to pass the patients' bill of rights, to do more to support equal pay for equal work -- a bigger and bigger issue among working husbands, as well as working women. (Applause.) All these things need to be done if we are going to have the proper balance between work and family, so that our parents can do their job if our schools do theirs.

We have to build the right quality of life for the 21st century. We talked a lot at the governor's meeting today about the livability agenda that I put forward with the leadership of the Vice President, Carol Browner, Rodney Slater, Dan Glickman, to try to help our communities manage their traffic problems, their toxic problems, their need for more green space with no federal mandates and a lot of empowerment. I hope you will help me pass that. (Applause.)

And, finally, as the governors get more and more and more involved in the global economy -- and you've been leading us that way for 25 years now -- I hope you will help me in my continuing effort to convince the Congress and the country that there is no longer a clear dividing line between our interest beyond our borders and our interest within our borders. I'll just give you one example.

I want to keep this economic expansion going. I am convinced that to do it we have to have more economic growth at home and more economic growth abroad. Governor Patton invited me to Kentucky's Appalachian Region to push my America New Markets initiative -- tax credits and loan guarantees to get people to invest in the high unemployment areas of America. Mayor Archer here in Detroit got one of our first enterprise zones and the unemployment rate in Detroit is now one-half of what it was in 1993. Detroit's unemployment rate is about at the national average. (Applause.) We can do that in rural areas and urban communities all over America. (Applause.)

And then we have to reach out beyond our borders to create a financial system and a trading system that works for ordinary people in the 21st century; to have labor standards, environmental standards and more open markets; to make it possible for money to go into places, but to make honest loans and open loans and protect against these wild fluctuations that have not only hurt overseas countries, but have hurt American farmers, have hurt our companies like Boeing and have been a killer for the steel industry. We have got to put a human face on the global economy, but we cannot run away from it. The governors know that.

And I ask you to help to build a national consensus for that approach -- not for running away, but not for saying, well, we'll just open things up and forget about how it affects ordinary people. In the end, the test of all of our efforts as Democrats is, are people out there in the country who never come to a fundraiser, but get up every day and work their hearts out and raise their kids and do everything they're supposed to do, are they going to be better off if this policy prevails? That is the heart and soul of what drives our party. And if we can deal with the aging of 21st century America, the challenges of children and

family in 21st century America, the challenges of our environment in 21st century America, the security challenges of 21st century America, we're going to do just fine.

We can only do that if we deal with one last challenge, which I believe today more than any other thing, is the distinguishing difference between the two parties. And that is, we believe the 21st century America must be one America, united, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (Applause.)

Every night for the last several nights I made a call to the Secretary of State, who is over in France trying to broker a peace agreement in Kosovo, trying to avoid another horrible ethnic slaughter in a country right next door to Bosnia -- and you know what we went through there. Every week I try a little harder to use the time I have remaining to get a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In the last several weeks I have exerted what efforts I could, so far without success, to avoid a brutal, murderous conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, to minimize the other tribal wars in Africa.

Now, after years of work we've hit another snag in the peace process in Northern Ireland and we are doing our best to try to get by this last, tough thing. All you have to do is to read the papers to know that there are continuing tensions between India and Pakistan, between Greece and Turkey, that have old, deep, ethnic and religious roots. All over the world, in the so-called modern world, ancient animosities are driving people to the point of war; and are keeping people down, ordinary people, in other countries -- the kind of folks we try to represent here cannot build a normal life because their leaders are determined to continue conflicts based on racial, religious or ethnic lines.

And it's why we have to guard so hard against that sort of thing here at home. We think we're doing great now and we can indulge ourselves in conflicts that we know better than to pursue, that is wrong. And we have to honestly say the great test of our democracy in the end is whether in good times and bad America not only tries to do good abroad, but to be good at home. In the end, we will be judged by that. We have to be a country where we all serve together, which is why I've worked so hard for AmeriCorps. We have to be a country where we're pushing back constantly the frontiers of discrimination, which is why I have supported so strongly the employment nondiscrimination act. (Applause.)

And we have to be a country that relishes our racial, our ethnic, our cultural diversity and says, we celebrate all this, but we know that underneath what God gave us all in common -- in spite of all of our differences -- is more important; that the framers of our Constitution, so long ago were pretty smart when they talked about the inalienable rights given to every human being. And if we recognize that, then we ought to be able to find a way to live together.

I have done everything I know to do for six years to move us toward that one America. Should we have differences, should we have arguments, should we have elections, should we have discussions? Of course we should. But when you leave here tonight if you don't remember another thing I said, you just remember this: no country throws away its common values and common humanity, even for an instant, without paying a price. (Applause.) And every night -- every night -- I thank God that we have the chance to be a force for peace from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Kosovo to Africa. I ask for the opportunity every night to make one stab to work out the problems between Greece and Turkey on Cyprus, to try to bring India and Pakistan closer together. And I thank God every night that we have not been cut apart by those things.

But America is growing more and more diverse. One of our new governors

here, Governor Davis, while he is governor -- while he is governor -- may preside over a state that has no majority race. Now, this is a good thing in the world of the 21st century if -- but only if -- America not only preaches our doctrine to people abroad, but lives by it at home. (Applause.) The Democratic Party in the 1990s has constantly been for opportunity, for change and for community.

I like to joke that at the end of the 20th century, looking back on over 200 years of American history, our party leaves this century and enters the next as not only the party of Jefferson and Jackson and Franklin Roosevelt, but also now the party of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. And I am very proud of it. I want you to stay proud of it. And I want us to live by it.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END

9:22 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 23, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION DINNER

Washington Convention Center
Washington, D.C.

9:07 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much for that wonderful, wonderful welcome. Thank you, Governor Rossello, for your remarks and your leadership. It's good to see you and Maga here. And let me say it's a great tribute to you and to Governor O'Bannon and Judy O'Bannon and the other governors here that this is the most successful DGA fundraisers in history. Thank you, and thank Katie Whalen and all the staff. You did a wonderful job tonight. (Applause.)

I'm delighted to be here with all the governors and a lot of former governors who came back to see me. We all had our pictures taken together -- ex-governors. And I began to think about that ex thing. (Laughter.) I don't know how many of you saw the wonderful movie, Amistad. But it's a fabulous movie. But I went to the Washington premier and I was sitting back in the audience, and Anthony Hopkins, who is a magnificent actor, was portraying John Quincy Adams, who after he left the White House served eight terms in the Congress, and made the argument before the Supreme Court in behalf of the people who were turned into slaves on the ship and brought over here. But when he was preparing -- there's a great line in the movie where John Quincy Adams says of himself -- he said, there is nothing in life more pathetic than a former President. (Laughter.)

So I got to thinking, I hope that's not true. (Laughter.)

I like being a former governor. I was the chairman of this group in 1980 -- 18 years ago. I'm the only person who ever served as chairman of this group who was not yet old enough to vote. (Laughter.) And that's because Jim Hunt made me do it. (Laughter.)

But for nearly 20 years now, I have followed the fortunes of the Democratic governors. And I want to try to emphasize tonight one of the points that Governor Rossello made about the importance of the '98 elections and why it matters what the party affiliation -- but more importantly, what the philosophy, the values, the direction of the governors is and will be as we move quickly into a new century.

I'd like to begin with a kind of a representative issue that is rather unique in American public life, the issue that Governor Rossello's whole career embodies -- that of Puerto Rico. This is the centennial year of Puerto Rico's affiliation with the United States. And I think that it is time that we responded to the aspirations of the four million U.S. citizens who live there and

allow them to determine their ultimate political status. (Applause).

The people in Puerto Rico have local self-government, but they do not have votes that are fully votes in their national government. My colleague, when I was a governor, was Carlos Romero Becerra who now represents Puerto Rico in the Congress, and he does a great job. I'm glad to see him back there. (Applause.)

I have always said that the people of Puerto Rico should decide for themselves, and Congress ought to give them a chance to do that, what they want their relationship to the United States to be. There is now a bipartisan bill making its way through the Congress to establish a process for resolving this issue that gives Puerto Ricans the powers to vote on the long-discussed options of statehood, commonwealth or national sovereignty, independent or linked with the United States.

Some people question the option of statehood because of the Hispanic culture of Puerto Rico. And with all respect, I disagree with them. (Applause.) After all, this is an issue for the 21st century for America.

Consider the history: We have made Puerto Ricans citizens. We have drafted them into the Armed Forces. We extend most laws to them, especially those that are convenient to us -- the rest of us. To use their culture, to bar them from voting rights or responsibilities in our country if they so choose to seek them by majority vote is wrong. And this is not primarily about Puerto Rico, but about the rest of us. What are our values? What is our culture? How can we make one America in a world and a nation ever more diverse? We have to begin by saying, it doesn't matter what your ethnic or racial or religious heritage is; it matters only if you embrace the ideas of the founders as embodied in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. (Applause.)

I say that because I think tonight I want to bring you back to first principles. I've spent a lot of time over the -- well, going back to at least to 1984 trying to modernize the Democratic Party, trying to get rid of all the things that people used to be able to say about us that would keep us from winning the White House, that would keep us in almost a defensive position constantly in the national political debate.

I have constantly argued that we had to go beyond the debate that paralyzed Washington in the 1980s between those who said government was the problem and those who said government was the solution, to embrace nationally a philosophy that was embedded in the work of every Democratic governor I ever worked with, going back to the 1970s -- the belief that government ought to be no bigger than necessary; ought to be as little inefficiency and ought to be as little bureaucracy in the government as possible, but that government should be progressive, should be committed to being a good partner, should be a catalyst for new ideas at work and, most important of all, should be absolutely unequivocally committed to giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives and to making sure everyone had a fair chance at their version of the American Dream.

So I spent a lot of time on that and I think there's a lot of evidence that it works. The government is the smallest it's been since President Kennedy was here, but we have done more to open the doors of college to all Americans, for example, than ever before. We are making the biggest investment in child health in a generation, as Governor Rossello said. My present balanced budget has the largest effort to improve kindergarten through 12th grade education

his
P.R. 10-07-98

in the history of the republic. (Applause.)

So I spent a lot of time talking about how we have modernized our party and how there is a third way that broke the logjam of the '80s. But what I want to say to you tonight is the most important thing is all modernizing our party did was to give us a way of being true to the oldest ideals of both our party and our nation.

Who came here and why in the beginning? A bunch of folks came here who had suffered all kinds of persecution -- political persecution, religious persecution. And what did they want to do? They wanted to be rid of the arbitrary, abusive exercise of unlimited power by people in government. Why? Because they thought free people who could direct the government instead of being directed by it could do a good job of first protecting liberty; second -- go back and read it at the beginning -- pursuing happiness; and third, forming a more perfect union.

And I would argue to you that at every important time in the history of this country, our country's greatness has depended upon our willingness to reaffirm those three missions. We had to deepen the meaning of our freedom, widen the circle of opportunity, and strengthen the bonds of our union.

Now, the Democratic Party may not have always been right. But in the 20th century, from Woodrow Wilson through Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter to the present day, I don't think you have any doubt which party was more constantly standing up for always, always deepening the freedom of the American Dream and broadening it to more people, and expanding the circle of American opportunity, and trying to hold this union together and make it stronger and stronger instead of letting it be thrown apart. (Applause.) I don't think you have any doubt.

So I say to you tonight, if we're going to strengthen this country for the 21st century, we at the national level have to create an economy based on opportunity for all. That means we have to bring the light of free enterprise to the neighborhoods and the urban areas and the rural areas that haven't felt it yet. It means we have to give our country the best system of K-12 education in the world for everybody, not just a few. It means we have to do a lot more to continue to grow the economy.

Now, if we already have 4.7 percent unemployment -- the lowest in 24 years -- the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history. Which party is most likely to finish America's mission? And you know as well as I do, those of you who are governors or who work for governors or who have been governors, a great deal of the remaining work of building this economy has to be done community by community, state by state.

If we want, as I said in the State of the Union, a society based on responsibility -- what does that mean? It means people ought to be able to have health care if they're good, responsible citizens and they're willing to do what they can for it. We ought to let people who are over 55 who have been cast aside by their employers buy into the Medicare system and not be bereft for 10 years when they're very vulnerable. (Applause.) We ought to pass the Health Care Patient's Bill of Rights. (Applause.) We ought to do more to make child care safer and more affordable and more accessible. We ought to do more not only to protect our streets from juvenile crime, but to open our schools between the time the learning in the classroom is over and the parents get home, so we give kids

something positive to do and keep them out of trouble in the first place. (Applause.) These are the missions of building a society based on responsibility.

Now, I can do some things with the Congress to achieve those goals. But how all these programs are implemented along with welfare reform -- will welfare reform be a way of empowering people to move from welfare to work so that people can succeed at work and succeed as parents and take care of their children, or will it be just a back-handed way to save money.

Now, there are a lot of governors in the other party who have done some things I agree with. But, on balance, who do you think is more likely to build a society based on opportunity, that tries to lift everybody up and give everybody a chance, and rescue the kids that have been left behind, and build strong families and strong communities? I think you know the answer to that. And I think you're proud to be here tonight, just like I am, because of the answer to that question. (Applause.)

If we want to build a nation that lives by community -- what does that mean? It means we have to continue to improve the environment even as we grow the economy -- cleaner water, cleaner air, safer food, fewer toxic waste dumps. It means we have to meet our challenge of doing our part on the issue of global warming. And it means we have to do it in a way that uses technology and common sense and creativity to continue to create jobs and grow the economy as we improve the environment. Now, which party is more likely to do that?

If we want to be one community, we have to be willing to reach across the divides of America. Look at the last 20 years. Which party has tried to win elections by bringing people together, and which has tried to win elections by driving a wedge through the heart of the American electorate? I'm proud to be here tonight with all of you, and I think you know the answer to that question. (Applause).

So, as I have said many times, I want to say one more time, we have to give it to our friends in the Republican Party. From the time Abraham Lincoln was elected until the time Teddy Roosevelt left office, if we are honest, we will say they did a better job than we did of standing for deeper freedom, wider opportunity, and a stronger union. Those were not our best years. But from the time of Woodrow Wilson to the present day and toward the 21st century, we may not have always been right, but we were always on the right side. (Applause).

And so, I ask you to think about that. I'm proud of the fact that our administration has done more than my two predecessors of the Republican Party in giving more power to the states. I'm proud of the fact that we have waived more federal rules in more areas in five years than they did in 12 years. (Applause.) I'm proud of all that because I trust -- (applause) -- I trust the concept of the states as laboratories of democracy. But the more responsibilities the governors get, the more it matters who the governor is.

And I want you to think about that. And when you go home tonight, I want you to ask yourself if you agree with my definition of what it means to be an American and to meet our challenges and to do the right thing at every moment of challenge and change. This is a big change time. This is huge.

You know the other night after the State of the Union

address our web page had 400,000 hits on the Internet? One web page. And, of course, there are millions upon millions of web pages. You know how many places there were on the web when I was elected President? Fifty -- 50 -- five years ago. And they all belonged to physicists. (Laughter.) So if you could have gotten in, most of you would have been like me and you wouldn't have understood it. (Laughter.) That is just a metaphor for how the world is changing. Knowledge, the whole volume of knowledge, doubling every five years.

Hillary came up with this idea that we should honor the end of our service here after two terms with a gift to the millennium entitled "Remembering the Past and Imagining the Future." We want to save Old Glory and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, those four things -- and get communities all over America to do the same. And we want to have the biggest investment in the future in medical and other research in the history of America to look toward the future.

But in the end all this new-fangled stuff and all this change will only work to make us a happier, healthier, stronger people if we end where we started. A great line from T.S. Eliot, "the end is in our beginning" -- we have to end where we started. You be proud when you leave here tonight, because you belong to a party that is fighting to expand and deepen the meaning of freedom, and to widen the circle of opportunity, and to make this a stronger United States of America. I'm proud, and I'm proud of you for being here.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

9:25 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 12, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION RECEPTION

The Mayflower Hotel
Washington, D.C.

8:47 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you, Loretta. Thank you, Katie. Thank all of you who had anything to do with this fundraiser. This is an exercise of true affection because Howard Dean would probably win next year if none of us gave him a penny. (Laughter.) But I am delighted to be here. (Applause.)

Senator Leahy and I were standing back there when Howard was giving his remarks, and he said, he suffered through 16 years of Republican leadership, the deficit was going up before I came in. And I said, you know, Pat, it was really only 12 years, it just seemed like 16. (Applause.)

I'd like to say a special word of thanks, too, to Senator Pat Leahy, who is truly one of the finest people in the entire United States Congress and one of the most effective. (Applause.) Whether the issue is economic policy, agriculture policy, social policy, foreign policy, his passion to remove the scourge of land mines from the Earth, Pat Leahy is always there. And we can be proud that he represents not only the state of Vermont, but all of America very well. (Applause.)

I'd also like to say that whatever it is that Howard Dean knows, or whatever it is that he eats for breakfast every morning, if I could give it to every other Democratic office holder and would-be office holder, we would immediately become the majority in the Congress and we would have about 35 governors. (Applause.) I have to tell you, I think a big part of it is just producing for people, actually doing what you say you're going to do at election time. And I very much appreciate what he said about what we've tried to do here in Washington.

One of the -- I'm delighted -- I love to do fundraisers and events for Democratic governors or the Democratic Governors Association in Washington because one of the things that I learned when I moved to Washington and what I feared was that people don't think that those of us who have been governors exist out there. And we might as well be in a zoo somewhere.

When I came to Washington, I would read editorials from the prominent newspapers saying that if you cared about the deficit and crime and welfare, you were stealing Republican issues. And I said, now, wait a minute, the last time I checked, the debt of this country quadrupled under a Republican President, crime was going up when I took office and the welfare rolls were expanding. And since I've been in office, we've cut the deficit by 92 percent, crime has gone down every year, and the welfare rolls have dropped by three million. I think those are American issues the Democratic Party has done very well on, and I don't understand all this. (Applause.)

Out in the country, you know, Democrats care about the deficits

and welfare reform and safe streets. And you know what? Democrats care about them in Washington, too. We passed a crime bill in 1994 overwhelmingly with Democratic support with a little Republican support. We passed the economic program in 1993 only with Democrats. And we began the welfare reform effort through the Executive Branch, as Howard Dean said; then I vetoed two bills first because I refused to take away the guarantee of health care and nutrition from children, and I wanted to have enough money for child care if we were going to require people to go to work. So we got it right and the results were good for America, and I'm proud of that.

But one last point I want to make. This has been a very good year for the United States in Washington. We had an enormous effort to pass the balanced budget that has things that I think every Democrat in this country and every American ought to be proud of. It's the biggest investment in health care for poor children since 1965 -- Howard talked about that -- biggest investment in education since 1965, biggest investment in helping open the doors of college to all Americans since the G.I. Bill 50 years ago. Substantial reforms of Medicare, including efforts to improve what we're doing in diabetes that the Diabetes Foundation says are the most important advances in the care of diabetes since insulin was developed 70 years ago. We have added 12 years to the Medicare trust fund and given our seniors more choices. This was a big deal.

We also are working on expanding NATO to ensure our partnership in security in Europe. We've passed the Chemical Weapons Convention, a big issue. One of the big disputes we're having with Saddam Hussein now and these inspectors is that these inspectors in Iraq have found enough potential chemical, biological and incipient nuclear technology, more than was destroyed in the Gulf War. We want to wipe the prospect of chemical warfare off the face of the Earth. We don't want a bunch of terrorists with laboratories in briefcases going from airport to airport wreaking havoc in the world of the 21st century that our children will live in. We took a big step toward that. So this has been a good year.

But in addition to my affection for Governor Dean and my gratitude to the people of Vermont for voting for Bill Clinton and Al Gore twice by big margins -- (applause) -- and my desire to help members of my party, I want -- I think it's very important that you understand that even though sometimes I get the feeling around here many people don't remember that the governors or the mayors or the county officials, for that matter, are really out there doing a lot of things -- the governors are especially important for the strategy that I'm pursuing for America to succeed.

We got \$24 billion for children's health; that's good. What's step two? The governors have to design a program that works. And I promise you every governor with any sense in this country without regard to party is going to wonder what Howard Dean is going to do with the money because they know that Vermont has done the best job of expanding health care coverage for children. So it matters who the governor is.

You can put more money into education, but the governors have to decide how it's going to be spent. We won a huge battle which we're going to be really highlighting in the next couple of days when we sign the appropriations bills -- to get the Congress after months and months of contentious fighting to embrace the notion that we ought to have national standards of academic excellence and national exams in reading and math for elementary students and 8th graders. But what happens afterwards? Education is the primary province of the states. The federal government can facilitate national excellence in education; the governors have to ensure it.

In the environment, we're trying to cleanup 500 toxic waste dumps

and prove we can have clean air, clean water and safe food and grow the environment. We can provide funds, we can have federal standards; but in the end, the specific work is largely done in the states.

And as we move into this new era where we have to have more flexibility, more partnerships and more common sense, in which we want to reject the kind of ideological false choices we're often confronted with in the political debates here, the partnership that exists and the quality of it and the quality of the people that do the work at the state level -- the partnership with the federal government will be critical in terms of how Americans actually get to live and what kind of world our children actually grow up in. That's what this is about.

So in so many ways the governorship is more important than ever before. We have tried to give more responsibility to the states. We've also tried to give them more things to do. And it has succeeded in places like Vermont, which have had visionary leadership.

I can only hope and pray that every governor will do the job that I know that he will do -- in health care, in education, in the environment, in building a solid future for our children. You're going to help him to do it by your presence here tonight, and I'm very grateful to you. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

8:55 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 3, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL DINNER

Omni Shoreham Hotel
Washington, D.C.

6:40 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Governor Dean, for that wonderful introduction. And I thank the orchestra for playing me in. (Laughter.) Thank you, Governor Rossello, for your leadership in the DGA. And to our DNC General Chair, Governor Roy Romer, thank you for agreeing to do that. I hope it made the Democratic Governors feel better; it sure made me feel better when you did it. (Applause.)

Our Democratic National Chairman, Steve Grossman, thank you for being here tonight. And thank you, Santita, for singing again. You got me in a good humor before I had to come out and speak.

You all know that the Vice President is coming over later -- I'm just the warm-up act. (Laughter.) But that's probably as it should be. At least that's what he asked me to say right before I left the White House. (Laughter.) I thank you for understanding why I can't be here all evening. As you know, the State of the Union is tomorrow night, and I hope that the governors who are here will be staying for it. We have a place for all of you.

It's a very different city than it was a year ago. A year ago we had a cold wave -- and a cold wave in politics so bad that it shut the government down. And the American people had something to say about it in the months ahead after that, and then definitively in November. And it's a lot warmer outside this year than it was last year. And I like it. (Applause.)

All of you know that I have been deeply indebted to my own experience as a governor and to the Democratic Governors for many of the ideas that we have brought to bear over the last four years. Our country has produced 11.2 million jobs, for the first time in history in a four-year presidential administration. (Applause.) We have -- crime has come down in every year. The welfare rolls have dropped by 2.24 million, the largest amount in history.

Inequality among working people has started back down again, after a 20-year increase, with particular drops for single parents working to support their children, the elderly, and African Americans.

In the last four years, thanks to the work that we have done together, we have, first of all, reversed our country's addiction to supply-side economics, and substituted for it an

economics based on investing in people, expanding trade, reducing the deficit, and ultimately, balancing the budget in the right way. (Applause.)

We have restored the family and community as the centerpiece of our social agenda with initiatives like the Family and Medical Leave law, which we celebrated the fourth anniversary of just this week, and which I hope to expand in this coming session of the Congress -- and I hope you will help me do that. (Applause.)

When it comes to crime and welfare we replaced rhetoric with action, and that's why results have flowed. We have redefined the role of government -- no longer do the American people believe, and no longer are they being told that government is the enemy. They know that the role of government is to be our partner to give us the tools to solve our problems and to create the conditions in which Americans can flourish.

And finally, we have reaffirmed the importance of our national community. No longer is it commonplace in our national politics to see victory come from dividing Americans by race, by gender, or in any other way. And I'm proud of that; perhaps proudest of all that we have rebuked the people who want to divide us as a nation. That's what the Democratic Party is all about. (Applause.)

In the next four years -- well, you have to wait until tomorrow night to hear about that. (Laughter.) But let me say that in the next four years I will still depend upon the Democratic Governors for your ideas; two of them you know I have embraced with particular vigor -- the HOPE Scholarship, pioneered by Governor Zell Miller in Georgia -- (applause) -- and the idea of providing national certification to the most excellent teachers in America, pioneered by Governor Jim Hunt in North Carolina. I thank you both for that. (Applause.)

What I want to leave you with is that I think in the last four years we've basically unlocked the potential of our country by fixing a lot of things that were wrong and by redefining what the stakes are. In the next four years we have to take initiatives to shape America for the next 50 years. And what I want you to think about when you go back home is this: It's not very often that a country has a period of such enormous peace and prosperity and yet, is still confronted by such great challenges. And what has brought us to this moment in history is the incredible rate and scope of change of the time in which we live.

We're not just moving into a new century and a new millennium, we're moving into a whole new way of doing things. It's changing the way family life works, it's changing the way work life works, it's changing the way people relate to each other in society and across national borders. It poses particular challenges for our educators, but also challenges for all the rest of us.

We're also learning a lot of things that impose new responsibilities on us. I know that the Democratic governors heard from my friend, Rob Reiner, who is sitting out here at this table, who is passionately concerned about what happens to children from the time they're born until they're two or three years old. We now know things about those years that we never knew before. And that imposes upon us responsibilities we never had before -- because we now know we can prevent problems from occurring we didn't think we could, and we can unleash potential we didn't know was there, and that requires us to behave in a different way.

So, tomorrow night, I'm going to try to talk about the next steps I think we have to take. But I want you to think in big terms about this. Every time a governor is elected who has real vision and real understanding and a real willingness to take prudent risks to tap the potential of this moment. We have advanced the cause of freedom and democracy, and we've given more people a chance to light up their own lives. That's really what all this is about.

Democracies normally don't do very well in times of peace and prosperity. They sort of get complacent and kind of go to the golf course twice a week. Sounds like a good idea to me. (Laughter.) Unfortunately, we don't have that luxury now -- not if we're going to do what we ought to do.

So that's what this is about tonight. In the next two years we'll be seeing 38 governors races come up for a vote of the people, affecting 80 percent of the people who live in this country. And the decisions that will be made by those governors will chart the course for the next century. This is a very, very important time to be making these judgments. And I can tell you, having now been President for four years and having been a governor for 12 years -- I could tell you a lot of things about that -- (laughter) -- but the point I want to make is there are a lot of things that a President can do and a lot of things a President can't. There are some things that can and will only be done by the governors of this country, working with people throughout the states. It matters a great deal.

You know that. That's why you're here tonight. But as you think about this tonight and tomorrow night at the State of the Union and the work that I'm going to help you do in the next two years to try to make sure we elect more people from our party to the statehouses to move this country forward, just remember, usually democracies get lazy in times of peace and prosperity. The changes and the challenges of this time do not permit us to do this. If we do it we will regret it for a very long time. If we don't, you ain't seen nothing yet.

Thank you, and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

6:50 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 23, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN MEETING WITH DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS

State Dining Room

2:38 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Governor Walters, thank you for that introduction. That was spoken with a fervor that could have only been mustered by someone who, a year and a month ago, was freezing to death in the Super 8 Motel in Manchester, New Hampshire. (Laughter.)

I also want to tell you that we just had a press conference at the other end of the hall, and I was upstairs on the telephone and I didn't know you were here yet. (Laughter.) And I was told that I had been introduced, so I rushed downstairs, only to find that I would be introduced twice or thrice. (Laughter.)

I'm delighted to see you all. I thank you for being here. I thank the leaders of business and labor and state and local government for coming along with my colleagues in the Democratic Governors group to endorse this program.

Last week was a remarkable week here in this capital. The House of Representatives took a strong stand for the most credible deficit reduction program in anybody's memory. At their request and based on the Congressional Budget Office estimates and based on what the governors asked, we took another \$60 billion-plus in deficit reduction spending cuts so that now we'll have \$500 billion in deficit reduction over five years; a significant amount of tax increases, most of them on upper income people whose incomes went up the most in the 1980s, but a broad-based BTU tax that we think will both preserve the environment, to promote energy conservation and raise money in a fair way; big spending cuts; and, finally, some very significant, but very targeted investment increases.

The debate moves to the Senate this week, and I want to tell you a little about that, because there is an honest philosophical debate going on, as well as an underlying political one that I need your help on.

In the last 12 years I think you could argue that your government had two big problems: one is that the deficit literally exploded, and the public debt quadrupled. We started the decade of 1980 with a \$1-trillion debt; we in 1992 had it up to \$4 trillion, with huge projected annual operating deficits. That is a massive problem. It led to a big gap between short- and long-term interest rates, and it clearly had a major contributing impact on our trade deficit, our ability to save and invest and our long-term economic growth. We had to do something about it.

The other big problem was that we were actually seeing reductions in investment by the national government even as all of

our competitors were increasing their investment. And that may seem inconsistent. I mean, how could we be making a relatively smaller contribution at the national level to the education, for example, of people who graduate from high school but don't go to college and need apprenticeship programs? How could we be retrenching in our commitment to the education of our young children and to dealing with the problems of poor children? How could we be retrenching in our commitment to develop new technologies and new partnerships in the public-private sector and new partnerships for dual-use technologies between defense and domestic technologies?

Well, the answer is pretty clear. We're spending more and more money every year, first on defense in the first part of the 1980s; and then the latter half of the 1980s, while we have cut defense, we spend even more on interest on the debt and more money for the same health care. And then as all of you know, those of you who are employers in particular, about 100,000 Americans a month are actually losing their health insurance; and many of them, the lower-wage working people, are coming onto the public rolls.

So that's what's happened to us. So we run the deficit up. We run investment down at the same time. That is a huge problem. Our plan seeks to address both of these. There are those who really don't want a change. They don't want any tax increases, or they don't really want the cuts that I have offered. And they're going to maneuver this process for political paralysis.

But underneath that or over that, if you will, there are a group of people who do want to reduce the deficit but just don't agree that an investment strategy is important. And they are the people that I urge you to reach out to, because it is important to reduce the deficit. But it's also important to increase investment. And if you do one without the other, you won't get the full benefits of this plan.

I would argue to you that we have gotten a major benefit out of deficit reduction. Look what has happened to long-term interest rates -- down almost a full point since the election. You have millions of Americans refinancing business debt, consumer debt, home mortgages, getting the benefit of variable interest rates on various kinds of debt payment. That will unleash billions of dollars -- tens of billions of dollars into this economy this year, which in turn will be reinvested, which will create new jobs. That is very important. I don't think the marginal amount of deficit reduction you would get by killing this investment package or killing our emergency jobs program would bring interest rates down anymore. You just can't get them down much more.

But we would, if we killed it, forgo the chance to jump-start the job engine of this economy by half a million jobs. And that is a serious thing. That's about a half a percent on the unemployment rate. That's a very substantial impact.

Now, let me make one other comment that again, the employers here as well as the employees will not find surprising. There has been a dramatic restructuring of our economy and of the global economy, which has been going on for the better part of 20 years, and we've been clearly aware of it for a decade now, where the biggest companies in America have been forced to restructure their operations here, either because they're going global and they have to put production overseas or because they just have to increase productivity and do more with less through technology.

But many of them have also provided for outsourcing or

contracts with smaller businesses, and the American entrepreneurial economy for the entire decade of the 1980s was able to create more jobs in the small business sector and the medium-size business sector than big business lost. Two years ago, it stopped. And it started slowing down about four years ago; so that over a four-year period we had almost no net job growth in the private sector, virtually all -- not quite all -- but almost all the net job growth for the previous four years was, believe it or not, in state, local and national government.

Job growth was cancelled out by job reduction in the private sector. Now, why did that happen? The truth is, no one knows all of the answers; it's an international phenomenon. In Europe during the 1980s, where they didn't have the vital small business sector that we had, and all the entrepreneurial culture, there were two major economic recoveries where the economy was growing like crazy and no new jobs were created.

So this is a global phenomenon. But we also know that part of the problem here has been the credit crunch, the general recession, the cost of hiring new workers because of the back-breaking costs of health care as well as other attendant costs; so more and more people are relying on part-time workers or asking their existing work force to work overtime.

I say that to make this point: We have gotten the maximum short-term benefits we can get now out of a very, very tough and vigorous deficit reduction program. We are going to get long-term benefits out of it. The time has come to put in the other piece to create jobs and to lay the foundation for an educated work force and for a high-technology future. And that is what the rest of this program does.

So I ask those of you who are living out there at the grassroots, in the private sector or at the state and local level to go make that honest policy argument in the United States Senate. We've done our work on deficit reduction; let's do our work on investing in our people and putting them back to work, too.

Thank you very much.

END2:47 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 1, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION DINNERThe National Building Museum
Washington, D.C.

9:21 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Governor Walters. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for that wonderful welcome.

I am full of gratitude tonight as I remember that just a year ago when I was at this banquet, I came in from the cold of New Hampshire, cold in more ways than one -- (laughter) -- and received from the leadership of this organization a white scarf, which I wore for the remainder of the campaign in New Hampshire to stay warm -- a cap which I still have, and a renewed sense that the battle in which I was engaged was worth the effort.

I want to thank every one of you who had anything to do with that. I noticed in the audience tonight the Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown who did such a brilliant job as the head of our party and keeping us going. (Applause.) Representatives of many groups -- teachers, working people and others out here in this audience that have worked so hard to give us a chance to put our children first in this country again. (Applause.) And many others who raised money, knocked on doors and walked along roads.

I want to pay a particular tribute tonight to my good friend, the Governor of Hawaii -- not only for his leadership as the chair of the Democratic Governors Association, but for being my friend and supporter and for giving us a model of what an aggressive, active Democratic leader ought to be. (Applause.)

Under John's leadership, the Democratic Governors Association had one of its busiest and most successful years. There are now two more Democratic governors. The DGA worked closely with our campaign and largely, as a result of that teamwork we won eight of the 12 races in which we were engaged last year. The best showing by the Democratic governors since 1982, when I, as the youngest ex-governor in the history of America made my comeback. (Laughter.)

Now we have Democratic governors in 30 of the 50 states, our best margin since 1985. I've also been impressed by John's extraordinary political leadership in Hawaii. When he was supporting me in the primary campaign last year I kept angling for an invitation to Hawaii. I kept saying, you know, I need to carry Hawaii; I haven't carried any western states. Don't you think I ought to show up out there? And he said, if I can't carry Hawaii for you without your presence, I shouldn't be the governor out here. And, sure enough, we did. (Applause.) I think it has something to do with his native Hawaiian heritage. We were playing golf once together in Hawaii, John and I, and we played on a course on which there were no

sand traps, there were only lava flows. (Laughter.) So that the ball simply disappeared, never to be seen again. And we both hit long drives that sliced slightly into the lava flows. Mine disappeared; his hit a rock and bounced into the middle of the fairway.

He informed me that his ancestors, who included King Kamehameha, who united the Hawaiian Islands, believed in a form of ancestor worship. And, now, surely I can see the ultimate truth of his faith.

Anyway, I think John and Lynne are great, and I hope that they will have many more years in public service. This country would be a lot better off if that happens. (Applause.)

I also want to salute the new chair of the DGA; my friend, David Walters from Oklahoma. He and Rhonda were among those who were in the snows of New Hampshire with me. I told them the other day when I saw them that I just looked at a picture of us a year ago; here we are now in Washington celebrating a new inauguration. A year ago, I have a picture of us with Mike Sullivan, the former Governor of Vermont Madeline Kunin, and the former Governor of Michigan, Jim Blanchard standing at the Super 8 Motel in Manchester. (Laughter.) And it's a great commentary on how we get things done in this country.

I think David Walters and Ann Richards will be a great team; that is, if Ann Richards is not too boastful about the Super Bowl victory last night. (Laughter.)

I remember last fall when the Democratic governors joined me in a western fly-around, and a campaign we called "Winning the West." Most people thought the Democrats had no chance in the West. We traveled to seven states and won six; in no small measure because of the inordinate support that the Western Democratic governors gave the Clinton Gore campaign. (Applause.)

Democratic governors from the South participated -- clap, Governor Roberts. That's good. You can clap for yourself. (Applause.) Democratic governors in the South participated in a fly-around campaign for me in a region in which we invested relatively small amounts of money. They went to six states, and for the first time in 12 years we carried three of them.

As someone who answered to the term "governor" until just 12 days ago, I'm proud to be here with the men and women who have been my friends and colleagues in the struggle to deal with the legacy of the 1980s -- people who deal with the real problems of real people, who can't make excuses or print money when there's no money there, who struggle with health care and welfare and jobs and education, and the ways that national economic trends and international development actually touch people's lives for good or ill.

As you and I learned from the elections last year, the American people want their political system and their government to end gridlock, to face problems and to make progress. They're tired of a process that's been too divided by partisanship or dominated by special interests or driven by short-term advantage of politicians instead of the long-term interests of people.

They sent us to the state house and the White House to change America. And they want action now. That is our mandate, and we must never forget it.

We have a chance to create a new Democratic majority in this country. Rooted in the experience of governing and living. But we must never forget some basic things. First of all, we have to do this together. The Congress and the President. The states and the communities and the national government.

I see in the audience a person who ran for President last year and turned out to be the best supporter I ever had in the presidential campaign -- Senator Tom Harkin from Iowa -- and I want to thank him. (Applause.) After a tough primary campaign, when he began to work for me, even in the primary when it was still going, I realized that he had gotten into this race for the same reason I had: He believed that we had to change this country. And the changes were more important than him or me or anybody else. Well, I still believe that. And if we remember that, we can succeed. (Applause.)

I think that you might be interested to know that there were some surveys conducted after the Inaugural Week. After the television ratings turned out to be very high and there were huge crowds at all the events, the people had watched the gala all over America and they'd watched that magnificent service at the Lincoln Memorial, and they'd watched our church service, and 800,000 people showed up at the Inaugural. And you know what people in America remembered most about the Inaugural Week? That on the day after the Inauguration, we opened the White House to ordinary Americans. That is what registered out in the country. (Applause.)

I say that because somehow we've all got to find a way to remember every day that the people who can't come to these dinners are the people we hold these dinners for. (Applause.) We also have to remember we got elected to try a new approach, to expand opportunity, not government, to increase investment and to show literally that we can reinvent government.

I was amazed -- you know, the other crowd had the White House for 12 years, and they have presented themselves as a businesslike and modern -- you know, and tried to make the Democrats look like yesterday's crowd. Well, when I got to the White House, guess what I found? Same phone system Jimmy Carter had. (Laughter.) With technology that was put in during Kennedy's time and changed only to put push buttons instead of dials. No E-Mail, no conference calls, but anybody could pick up the button I was talking on anywhere in the White House and listen in on the conversation. (Laughter.) So we could have the conference call we didn't want, but we couldn't have the one we did. (Applause.)

People said last week -- well, you know, when you're going to do controversial things, you need to gin up your operation again and send the talking points out and communicate with people. There's not even any E-Mail. It's a yesterday place, and we need to make it a tomorrow place. (Applause.)

I also want you to know that two of my Cabinet members have already met with every employee in their departments, in their national headquarters. And we're told, both of them, that they were the first secretaries in 12 years to meet with all their employees in their departments. (Applause.)

The leadership of one of our Cabinet agencies abolished the Executive Dining Room and saved \$125,000 or \$150,000 and brought the career employees up to the executive suite, and there were people who worked there for 25 years and had never seen where the bosses work. We are going to change the culture of the way this federal

government works. We are going to reinvent it and we're going to make it work again. (Applause.)

We are going to try to do what our adversaries always talked about, and that is to empower people, not entitle them. Whether it's welfare or trade or industrial policy or technology policy, what the American people want is a hand-up, not a handout, and we're going to give it to them, if we can get the kind of support we need across the country to support these changes. (Applause.)

And most importantly, we're going to try to recreate a sense of partnership and community in America again -- an America in which we don't have a person to waste. I believe as strongly as I can say that if we could create in this country a feeling burning in the heart of every American, that it was simply unacceptable to let one life go that could be saved, we could solve virtually every problem we have. Because if you look at every place where the system has broken down, the manifestation of that breakdown is somebody's life that is less than it ought to be. These children being shot in the streets. We're in Somalia, debating how we can keep peace in Somalia when the mortality rate is greater in some neighborhoods in the United States of America. (Applause.)

The immunization initiative that you've read about that we're going to be announcing in the next few days -- (applause) -- you know, we were actually criticized in a story in The New York Times, the idea that the national government might use its purchasing power to buy enough immunization vaccines to immunize all the kids in the country. And people say, well, that would be bad if we did that. It would be better if we don't and we'd let these kids get sick.

All the factory workers in this country that are losing their jobs because we have no real strategy to create jobs. Let me just say in parentheses here: As Democrats, we ought not ever forget that there is a big difference between economic measurements of progress and whether that progress is manifested in the real lives of people. (Applause.)

In the 1980s, the stock market tripled, but the Fortune 500 companies reduced employment. And the difference was made up by small business. So we can have a strong economy on the surface where the stock market is booming, but if small businesspeople can't get bank loans at the local bank, jobs won't be created for all these people that are losing their big employee jobs.

And we have to remember things like that. With all this so-called "economic recovery" of the last six months, we're not creating jobs yet. And we've got to find a way to put people back to work. That is the ultimate and first test of whether life is working in America. (Applause.)

Finally, let me reiterate a line that I borrowed from President Roosevelt for the Inaugural Speech. We learned in the 1980s that we had to be about bold, persistent experimentation. That is what I want to try to convince Congress and the country we ought to do. It means that we will try some things that will not work. And when we do, we have to have the courage to quit.

One of the weaknesses of our government is that when we start something that doesn't work, or whether we start something that does, we keep on doing it. We have to have the courage to experiment to try to stop, to start again. I am convinced that if we do that, we can deal with the health care crisis, we can deal with the deficit, we can deal with all these problems. But, ultimately, we

can change the shape of people's lives. And if I might say -- I know that it defies the momentary conventional wisdom -- I think we're off to a pretty good start. (Applause.)

The United States Congress in the next few days -- maybe both Houses after the recess -- will pass the new budget for the National Institute of Health. And now we'll be able to go back to doing research, including fetal tissue, that offers great progress in dealing with children with diabetes and Parkinson's and Alzheimer's and other problems. (Applause.) I think that is progress.

The United States Senate was good enough to confront every one of my Cabinet members, save one, on the day after I became President -- the first time in longer than a generation that that had happened. And I did get into a controversy. But you know something? If you just want me to do things that are easy, you should have elected somebody else President. (Applause.)

When we deal with things that are hard, there ought to be debate, there ought to be discussion. People ought to say they disagree. They ought to call the White House and jam the phone lines. And, by the way, there's a 1964 switchboard in the White House; that's one reason that the phone lines are jammed. (Applause.)

But I'm just telling you, I think this is exciting. We need to shake things up. We need to have a debate in this country again. We need to do things and talk about things, get them out and let people argue. (Applause.)

I think together we can do what we were hired to do. But remember -- I think we are about the business of creating a new democratic majority if, but only if, we go to where the people are, lift them up, bring them with us, and change their lives. That requires a decent attention to the opinions of Republicans who want to help in change, too. And most importantly, a passionate determination never to forget that there is a real reason that most Americans remembered -- 2000 of their number who won a lottery to come to the White House. They haven't felt like it was their house in a long time. You help me give it back to them, and we'll have a bright future.

Thank you and God bless you all.

END

9:39 P.M. EST